

**PRESS RELEASE****INDUS WATERS TREATY NEUTRAL EXPERT PROCEEDINGS
(REPUBLIC OF INDIA V. ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN)**

VIENNA, 31 JULY 2026

Pakistan's applications for the publication of pleadings and the disclosure of documents to the Court of Arbitration, adoption of Terms of Reference for a modelling exercise, and Fifth Meeting

This press release summarizes developments in the Neutral Expert proceedings commenced by the Republic of India against the Islamic Republic of Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty 1960 (the "**Treaty**") concerning India's Ratle and Kishenganga Hydroelectric Plants (the "**RHEP**" and the "**KHEP**") since the issuance of the [Press Release dated 2 January 2026](#).

Pakistan's Application for the Publication of Pleadings

At the Fourth Meeting held in this matter from 17 to 21 November 2025, as well as by letter dated 22 December 2025, Pakistan proposed that "the Parties' written and oral submissions, for purposes of [the] Fourth Meeting" or, in the alternative, "Pakistan's written and oral submissions alone," be published on the website of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (the "**PCA**").

Although it was invited to do so, India did not comment on Pakistan's application.

By [letter dated 19 January 2026](#), the Neutral Expert denied Pakistan's application for the publication of pleadings. The Neutral Expert noted that, on balance, and having considered the applicable procedural rules, Pakistan's submissions at and following the Fourth Meeting, as well as the views expressed by India in earlier phases of the proceedings, the publication of the Parties' pleadings at that stage was not desirable, as it would carry the risk of aggravating the dispute or affecting the integrity of the proceedings.

Pakistan's Applications for the Disclosure of Documents to the Court of Arbitration

On two occasions, by letters dated 11 February 2026 and 31 March 2026, Pakistan applied under Paragraph 14.3 of the Supplemental Rules of Procedure for permission to disclose certain documents from the docket of the Neutral Expert proceedings to the Court of Arbitration in the *Indus Waters Western Rivers Arbitration (Pakistan v. India)* (the "**Court of Arbitration**").

Although it was invited to do so, India did not comment on these applications.

By [letters dated 3 March 2026](#) and [10 April 2026](#), the Neutral Expert directed that Pakistan may disclose the requested documents to the Court of Arbitration, subject to drawing the attention of the Court to the confidentiality of the documents in question, which is to be maintained in the Court proceedings.

Modelling Exercise

On 10 February 2026, the Neutral Expert informed the Parties that it would assist him in the discharge of his functions to procure additional capacity to carry out numerical modelling in connection with certain of the differences placed before him and proposed to appoint a number of modelling specialists

(the “**Modelling Specialists**”). The Neutral Expert circulated the *curricula vitae* of the proposed Modelling Specialists, as well as their draft terms of reference and scope of work, for the Parties’ comments.

In the following months, Pakistan submitted a series of comments on the proposed modelling exercise, and the Neutral Expert provided certain clarifications and circulated further drafts of the terms of reference and scope of work of the Modelling Specialists. Although it was repeatedly invited to do so, India did not provide any comments.

On 26 May 2026, the Neutral Expert issued the [Terms of Reference for Modelling Specialists, including their Scope of Work at Annex E](#), as well as an [Addendum to those Terms of Reference](#) on 6 July 2026.

Pursuant to the Terms of Reference and Scope of Work, the Modelling Specialists are to assist the Neutral Expert and the Technical Assistant in carrying out numerical modelling in relation to:

- (i) the modelling of sediment transport in the Chenab River and sediment transport conditions in the future Ratle reservoir (Calculation A);
- (ii) the modelling of flow patterns occurring in the immediate vicinity of the Ratle dam intake and spillway area (Calculation B); and
- (iii) the calculation of the sediment volumes deposited in the KHEP reservoir between 2019 and 2021, and between 2021 and 2023 (Calculation C).

The modelling exercise is to be carried out in four stages:

- (i) First, a Pre-Design Elaboration Stage Meeting is to be held between the Neutral Expert, the Technical Assistant and the Parties to ensure, *inter alia*, agreement on matters such as datasets and output file format compatibility.
- (ii) Second, in a Design Elaboration Stage for Calculations A and B, Pakistan is to develop and submit to the Neutral Expert a geometric design and a design memo specifying the basis of the design configuration together with the complementary measures needed for the RHEP to be rendered compatible with hydroelectric operation (“**Pakistan’s Elaborated Design**”).
- (iii) Third, in an Independent Modelling Stage, the Modelling Specialists are to carry out the modelling work detailed above, including using Pakistan’s Elaborated Design, under the direction and control of the Neutral Expert and/or the Technical Assistant.
- (iv) Finally, the modelling exercise is to conclude with a Presentation of the Results and Discussion Stage, including oral and written reports by the Technical Assistant and the Modelling Specialists and a further meeting at which the Parties will be given an opportunity to put questions to the Modelling Specialists and discuss the modelling exercise with the Neutral Expert and the Technical Assistant (the “**Final Modelling Meeting**”).

The Scope of Work specifies that the framing of the modelling exercise does not reflect a judgment as to which Party bears the burden under the Treaty of proposing a Treaty-compliant design or on any aspect of burden of proof in the proceedings more generally.

The first stage of the modelling exercise was completed when the Pre-Design Elaboration Stage Meeting was held by video-conference on 3 June 2026. It was attended by Pakistan, but not India.

The timetable for the remainder of the modelling exercise was fixed in the Neutral Expert's [letter dated 6 July 2026](#).

Pakistan's Submission on Pondage

On 15 May 2026, the Court of Arbitration issued its Award Concerning Pondage Supplemental to the Award on Issues of General Interpretation of the Indus Waters Treaty (the "**Pondage Award**").

In accordance with the Work Programme in these proceedings, Pakistan submitted its Comments on the Pondage Award on 29 May 2026. Although it was invited to do so, India did not submit any observations on that Award.

Fifth Meeting

The Fifth Meeting was held at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna (the seat of the PCA Vienna office) from 8 to 10 June 2026.

The meeting was dedicated to submissions on pondage and questions from the Neutral Expert on pondage and other matters, which were put to the Parties both orally and in writing. The meeting concluded with a discussion of the next steps to be taken in these proceedings, including the timetable of the modelling exercise.

Pakistan's submissions were made by its Designated Representative and Attorney General H.E. Mr. Mansoor Awan; its counsel, Sir Daniel Bethlehem KC, Professor Philippa Webb KC, and Dr. Cameron Miles; and its technical expert, Mr. Peter Rae. Pakistan was also represented by Mr. Syed Muhammad Mehar Ali Shah, its Commissioner for Indus Waters; H.E. Mr. Mohammad Kamran Akhter Malik, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Republic of Austria; Ms. Charlotte Westbrook and Mr. Abdullah Tariq as counsel; and Dr. Greg Morris and Ms. Elsie Parilla-Castellar as technical experts.

India did not participate in the Fifth Meeting. Notwithstanding its current position regarding non-participation, the Neutral Expert has affirmed that India may rejoin the proceedings at any point in time in the future and it is being kept informed of developments in the proceedings in real-time. Following the Fifth Meeting, India was invited to comment in writing on all matters discussed at the meeting on the basis of the transcript. It has not done so.

On 30 June 2026 and 7 July 2026, Pakistan, as directed by the Neutral Expert, submitted further materials and information in response to the Neutral Expert's document and information requests in the course of the Fifth Meeting.

Revised Work Programme

On the basis of the discussions at the Fifth Meeting, and subsequent correspondence, and in order to provide sufficient time for the modelling exercise, the Neutral Expert issued a [revised Work Programme](#) on 6 July 2026. Certain dates were further confirmed by [letter dated 14 July 2026](#).

The key dates for the remainder of the proceedings are as follows:

20 August 2026	Completion of Pakistan's Design Elaboration Stage Work
9-10 November 2026	Sixth Meeting of the Neutral Expert with the Parties (Oral Report on the Independent Modelling Stage)

16 November 2026	Neutral Expert's Synthesis Memorandum
16 December 2026	Parties' Written Comments on the Synthesis Memorandum
3-5 February 2027	Seventh Meeting of the Neutral Expert with the Parties (Final Modelling Meeting)
16 March 2027	Circulation of the Neutral Expert's Draft Decision
16 April 2027	Parties' Written Comments on the Draft Decision
27-29 April 2027	Eighth Meeting of the Neutral Expert with the Parties (Exchange on the Draft Decision)
8 June 2027	Parties' Further Written Comments on the Draft Decision
Around 16 July 2027	Neutral Expert's Final Decision

Background on the Proceedings

On 13 October 2022, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank), pursuant to Article IX and Annexure F of the Indus Waters Treaty 1960, and after consultation with each of the Parties, appointed Mr. Michel Lino as Neutral Expert in these proceedings.

The Neutral Expert convened a first meeting with the Parties on 27 and 28 February 2023 at the headquarters of the PCA at the Peace Palace, in The Hague.

Following the first meeting, the Neutral Expert's Terms of Retainer were fixed on 2 May 2023. The Terms of Retainer also recorded the appointment of Mr. Luc Deroo as the Neutral Expert's Technical Assistant.

On 1 June 2023, the Neutral Expert issued Supplemental Rules of Procedure, including a Work Programme, which was subsequently revised on 21 August 2023, 11 October 2023, 2 November 2023, 29 May 2024, 4 June 2024, 11 March 2025, 18 December 2025, 19 January 2026, 3 March 2026 and, most recently, 6 July 2026.

On 5 June 2023, the PCA was appointed as Registry and Secretariat by the Neutral Expert. The proceedings are administered by the Vienna Office of the PCA, in cooperation with its Mauritius Office.

On 31 August 2023, India submitted its Memorial.

A second meeting with the Parties was held on 20 and 21 September 2023 at the Imperial Hofburg Palace in Vienna. Matters discussed at that meeting included the organization of the first site visit, questions arising from India's Memorial, and amendments to the Work Programme.

Following the second meeting, Pakistan submitted its Statement under Paragraph 7 of Annexure F to the Treaty on 1 February 2024 and India submitted its Reply to Pakistan's Paragraph 7 Statement on 14 June 2024.

From 20 to 28 June 2024, the Neutral Expert conducted a site visit of the KHEP and the RHEP, preceded by a 3-day preparatory visit by the Technical Assistant and a 2-person engineering team from each Party.

A third meeting with the Parties was held on 10 and 11 September 2024 at the Imperial Hofburg Palace in Vienna. During this meeting, each Party made oral submissions on the competence of the Neutral Expert under Paragraph 7 of Annexure F to the Treaty.

On 7 January 2025, the Neutral Expert issued a Decision on Certain Issues Pertaining to his Competence and, on 31 March 2025, he issued a Correction to that decision.

On 11 April 2025, the Neutral Expert issued directions addressing a request by Pakistan for measures to secure and safeguard the effectiveness of the proceedings.

On 26 May 2025, India informed the Neutral Expert of its decision “to keep the Treaty in abeyance” and requested that the dates for further hearings be vacated and that the Work Programme be put on hold. Pakistan opposed India’s request by letter dated 27 May 2025.

On 17 June 2025, the Neutral Expert denied India’s request for the suspension of the proceedings, confirming that the Work Programme remained in place.

On 28 July 2025, India notified the Neutral Expert of its withdrawal from the proceedings.

On 7 August 2025, Pakistan submitted its Counter-Memorial.

On 1 October 2025, Pakistan requested the continuation of the proceedings notwithstanding India’s withdrawal, and a determination of the matter on the basis of the Parties’ first round written submissions and the first site visit.

On 31 October 2025, Pakistan submitted its comments on the Court of Arbitration’s Award on Issues of General Interpretation of the Indus Waters Treaty dated 8 August 2025 (the “**Award on Issues of General Interpretation**”).

On 5 November 2025, the Neutral Expert confirmed his intention to proceed expeditiously and, in the event of India’s continued non-participation, to reach a determination without requiring the filing of second round written submissions or any further site visits.

A fourth meeting was held from 17 to 21 November 2025 at the Imperial Hofburg Palace in Vienna. India did not participate in the meeting. In its absence, the meeting focused on the presentation of Pakistan’s Counter-Memorial, Pakistan’s response to India’s Memorial, Pakistan’s submissions on the implications of the Court of Arbitration’s Award on Issues of General Interpretation, and questions from the Neutral Expert in relation to the entire record of the proceedings, including India’s Memorial.

More information about the proceedings can be found at <https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/297/>.

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Background on the Permanent Court of Arbitration

The Permanent Court of Arbitration is an intergovernmental organization established by the 1899 Hague Convention on the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. The PCA has 128 Contracting Parties. Headquartered at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the Netherlands, the PCA facilitates arbitration, conciliation, fact-finding, and other dispute resolution proceedings among various combinations of States, State entities, intergovernmental organizations, and private parties. The PCA’s International Bureau is currently administering 8 interstate proceedings, 90 investor-State arbitrations, 101 cases

arising under contracts involving a State or other public entity, and 11 other proceedings. More information about the PCA can be found at www.pca-cpa.org.

Contact: Permanent Court of Arbitration
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PHOTOGRAPHS ACCOMPANYING PRESS RELEASE



Pakistan's Designated Representative and Attorney General, H.E. Mr. Mansoor Awan, addressing the Neutral Expert at the Fifth Meeting in June 2026



Counsel for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Sir Daniel Bethlehem KC, addressing the Neutral Expert at the Fifth Meeting in June 2026



Counsel for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Professor Philippa Webb KC, addressing the Neutral Expert at the Fifth Meeting in June 2026